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INTERVIEW OF
THE HONORABLE HENRY A. KISSINGER
SECRETARY OF STATE

BY

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AND
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MR. BROKAW: Mr. Secretary, you worked out the details of a two-year transition to black majority rule in Rhodesia. Mr. Smith stated the conditions in a speech to Rhodesians last Friday. Now the black Presidents who have been participating in these negotiations are very critical of at least an element of those conditions. What has happened?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The basic proposals that were put forward were for majority rule in two years, a transitional government to be established immediately, a constitutional conference to work out the constitution at the end of the two years, and those points have been accepted.

Secondly, it isn't correct to say that Smith made these proposals. The proposals that Smith put forward were the result of discussions between the United States, Great Britain, and the African Presidents prior to my meeting with Smith.

I think one has to understand that each of these leaders has his own constituency. For African leaders to say they accept proposals of Smith is almost impossible.

They have indicated that there are certain things

they want to negotiate. They have indicated that they made no preconditions. We have received messages today from three of the leaders who attended the meeting, stressing that they think matters are on track, and that they are looking forward to early negotiations.

So, I think we should cut through the rhetoric and look at the reality. And there is going to be a lot of rhetoric in the next few weeks.

MR. BROKAW: But are you saying that these African leaders have been critical for their own domestic political purposes?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I am saying that obviously there will have to be negotiations for the transition.

MR. BROKAW: How many of these conditions does Mr. Smith think are negotiable?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The composition of the government, the allocation of ministers, none of this has been settled yet. This requires negotiation.

Prior to this, it is quite possible for both sides to make public statements that may seem irreconcilable. But we should always remember that the biggest steps have been taken, and that the differences that remain are

relatively small compared to the steps that have already been taken.

MR. VALERIANI: Mr. Secretary, have the African Presidents rejected anything that they told you they would approve, or are they upping the ante now?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The African Presidents have not indicated a rejection of anything specific. The African Presidents have made a general statement that they will not accept the dictation of Smith with respect to all the details of the transitional government.

On the other hand, what Smith has put forward was not his idea, but in itself reflected a compromise between many points of view. So, we will have to wait until a conference meets to find out what the real differences are.

The British are sending a minister to Africa within the next day, with the explicit purpose of getting the conference which all sides have now asked for to meet to work out the details.

MR. VALERIANI: There is no chance that you are going to go back, is there?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: There is no chance that I will go back.

MR. BROKAW: Will the conference have to take place in Rhodesia, as Mr. Smith seemed to indicate on Friday when he said it would be worked out in Rhodesia?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The locale of the conference in Rhodesia was not part of those five points. And I think that the basic point is that it should meet at a mutually agreeable place.

MR. VALERIANI: Mr. Secretary, if I can look back, it is very difficult to believe that this came about without your putting a great deal of pressure on Rhodesia or a great deal of pressure on South Africa to put pressure on Rhodesia in turn. How much pressure did you have to apply on South Africa? What did you have to promise South Africa?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We promised nothing to South Africa. Leaders make a decision on the basis of their assessment of what is likely to happen. South African leaders understood, as the Rhodesian leaders came to understand, that the alternative to a negotiation and to a peaceful settlement is an escalating war, whose outcome would be extremely problematical for them, and which has the great risk of expansion without changing the outcome.

Those were the basic facts that everybody faced. And when those facts became clear, certain conclusions followed. We did not have to bring any additional pressure other than an analysis of the facts.

MR. VALERIANI: What is to prevent the Russians from coming in now and backing a faction as they did in Angola, stirring up a civil war and having another Angola, which you are specifically trying to avoid?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: This has to be largely the responsibility of the African Presidents. It is up to the Africans to decide whether they want their continent to become the arena for great power rivalry. Because inevitably, outside intervention, as a regular pattern, cannot be ignored, or whether they want African solutions to African problems.

As far as the United States is concerned, we seek no sphere of influence in Africa. Up to now, the African Presidents have prevented any of the outside powers from backing any one of the factions. We support this, and if this continues, there can be a moderate, responsible, and peaceful outcome to Rhodesia.

MR. BROKAW: What do you see as the United States

continuing role in Rhodesia during this interim period over the two years,-- economically, in terms of assistance, and so on?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The immediate problem is to bring the various parties to the conference table within the framework of the principles that have been laid out.

Britain has to take the lead in this, because Britain has the constitutional and historical responsibility.

We will back it up diplomatically. We have been in close contact with all of the African Presidents in recent days, and nothing we have heard would indicate that this conference will not take place.

After the conference has met, after the transitional government is established, then it will be our policy to encourage this transitional government, and we will be prepared to talk with anyone about economic and other relationships.

MR. BROKAW: But no commitments have now been made prior to the establishment of that?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: There are no secret commitments. There are plans for economic cooperation which are in the process of being worked out, and which will

be submitted to the Congress before they are implemented.

MR. VALERIANI: You apparently have made a lot of guarantees to Rhodesian whites, or provisions for Rhodesian whites.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: That is not correct.

MR. VALERIANI: Well, there is an international fund of some sort, isn't there?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: There is the idea of a fund that can be used for investment as well as for guarantees. The purpose is not to drive the whites out but to enable the whites to stay there.

MR. VALERIANI: Why should the American taxpayer provide that kind of guarantee for Rhodesian whites?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Because the consequences of a race war in southern Africa, with foreign intervention, and of the radicalization of all of Africa, which would be the alternative, would cost the American taxpayer infinitely more than what we are thinking about now might cost.

MR. BROKAW: What is the next step in South Africa, in that country? What kind of pressure does this put now on Prime Minister Vorster?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I think South Africa has to face the necessity of change, and the domestic pressures that its system has imposed, and Prime Minister Vorster will have to consider what the evolution of his own country should be.

MR. BROKAW: In the not too distant future?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: In the not too distant future.

MR. BROKAW: After Rhodesia has a change to majority rule?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I do not want to go into details of what the South African Government should do. But most thoughtful South Africans I met realize that some changes were necessary.

MR. BROKAW: Mr. Secretary, very briefly, is this the last of your major shuttle diplomacy efforts in far distant points? Can you foresee any other place you will have to go?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Not before the election.

MR. BROKAW: Thank you, very much, Mr. Secretary.